

**SODA FIRE  
BURNED AREA EMERGENCY STABILIZATION PLAN**

**UNIT:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge

**LOCATION:** Kern County, California

**DATE:** June 13, 2005

**PREPARED BY:** Eva Kristofik, Refuge Manager

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Marc Weitzel, Project Leader  
Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex

## BURNED AREA EMERGENCY STABILIZATION PLAN REVIEW AND APPROVAL

**I. Project Leader** approval that the Burned Area Emergency Stabilization Plan meets approved land management plan management objectives.

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Project Leader, Hopper Mountain NWRC

Date

### II. Regional Fire Management Coordinator Concurrence

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Regional Fire Management Coordinator, CNO

Date

### III. Emergency Stabilization Funding Approval (check one box below):

- ☐ Approved
- ☐ Approved with Revision (see attached)
- ☐ Disapproved

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Manager, CNO

Date

### IV. Emergency Stabilization Funding Approval (check one box below):

- ☐ Approved
- ☐ Approved with Revision (see attached)
- ☐ Disapproved

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N/A for Emergency Stabilization Plans under \$500,000  
National Office

Date

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

This plan addresses emergency stabilization fire effects on Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge located in Kern County, California, as a result of the Soda Fire in. The plan has been prepared in accordance with the *Department of the Interior, Departmental Manual, Part 620: Wildland Fire Management, Chapter 3: Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation* and the Interagency Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook. This document provides emergency stabilization recommendations for U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service lands within the Soda Fire. The Bureau of Land Management Burned Area Emergency Response Team has addressed Carrizo Plain National Monument and other lands impacted by the fire, separately. The primary objectives of the Soda Fire Burned Area Emergency Stabilization Plan are:

- To repair or improve lands unlikely to recover naturally from severe wildland fire damage by emulating historic or pre-fire ecosystem structure, function, diversity, and dynamics according to approved land management plans.
- Restore or establish healthy, stable ecosystems, even if these ecosystems cannot fully emulate historic or pre-fire conditions as specified in approved land management plans.
- Repair or replace fire damaged minor operating facilities (e.g., campgrounds, interpretive signs and exhibits, shade shelters, fences, wildlife guzzlers, etc.)

The refuge manager conducted initial analysis of fire damage within the refuge boundary. In addition, gathered GPS data layers necessary for planning and inventoried fire damage to boundary fences.

### Fire Background

The Soda Fire started on June 4, 2005 at approximately 11:00 AM near the intersection of Highway 166/33 and Cerro Noroeste Road just east of Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge. The fire quickly spread onto the refuge with the aid of west bound winds. It then spread onto private Wind Wolves Preserve and was finally contained on the BLM Carrizo Plain National Monument just east of Highway 33 turnoff. The fire was declared 100 percent contained at approximately 4:30 PM. The fire suppression effort was managed under a Unified Command with Kern County Fire Department, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service. The cause of the fire was determined to be a burning blown tire from a semi-truck traveling west bound on Highway 166.

### Fire Damages and Threats to Human Safety and Natural and Cultural Resources

The fire burned 94 acres of grassland habitat on a refuge parcel located on the north side of Highway 166/33. The perimeter fencing sustained minor damage as the fire moved through the area.

As a result of suppression activities two sections of fence were cut to gain access to the moving fire and tire tracks were made by fire suppression engines moving within the refuge property. The fence lines were repaired three days after the fire and rehabilitation of disturbance made by the access of the engines are being pursued.

This plan is to address the long term impacts of non-native invasive species encroachment onto the refuge resulting from the fire suppression engine access through yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) (YST) areas found off refuge property. The refuge is in its fifth year of Noxious Weed Management Program, which includes controlling YST. As member of the Kern County Weed Management Program, the refuge controls infestations of YST through the use of herbicide (transline) and hand pulling. The area impacted by the fire and further by the access required by the suppression vehicles, will have to be monitored for infestations of invasive species and controlled when required. Long term effect will most likely not be evident until the following year.

### Bitter Creek NWR Management Requirements

Under the authority of the Endangered Species Act and the Land and Water Conservation Act, the former Hudson Ranch and adjoining properties were acquired by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) "to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species . . . or (B) plants . . .

" 16 U.S.C. § 1534 (Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. § 1531-1543, as amended) creating Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Although the habitat for all the species on the Refuge, including threatened or endangered species, was preserved the primary goal for the establishment of the Refuge was to preserve essential foraging and roosting habitat for the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*).

#### **PART A - FIRE LOCATION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Fire Name	Soda Fire
Fire Number	BTJ4
Agency Unit	FWS, BLM, Private
Region	California/Nevada Operations
State	California
County(s)	Kern, San Luis Obispo
Ignition Date/Cause	June 4, 2005/Human
Zone	South Zone
Date Fully Contained	June 4, 2005
Jurisdiction	Acres
US Fish and Wildlife Service	94
Bureau of Land Management	70
Private	287
Total Acres	451
Date Contained	June 4, 2005

## PART B - NATURE OF PLAN

Type of Action (check one box below)

X	Initial Submission
	Amendment to the Initial Submission

## PART C – EMERGENCY STABILIZATION ASSESSMENT

### Rehabilitation Objectives

- Locate and stabilize severely burned slopes which pose a direct threat to human life, property or critically important cultural and/or natural resources.
- Recommend post-fire emergency stabilization prescriptions which prevent irreversible loss of natural and cultural resources.
- As practical and necessary, restore natural conditions to areas disturbed by fire suppression actions.
- Conduct immediate post-burn reconnaissance for fire suppression related impacts to threatened and endangered (T&E) species.
- Implement emergency stabilization treatments prior to first damaging storms.
- Provide long-term monitoring recommendations intended to ensure the success of emergency stabilization efforts.
- Prevent the establishment of non-native invasive plants.

## PART D - TEAM ORGANIZATION, MEMBERS, AND RESOURCE ADVISORS

I. Burned Area Emergency Response Team Members: *(List of technical specialists used to develop the plan)*

Position	Team Member (Agency)
Team Leader	Mark Weitzel
Wildlife Biologist	Eva Kristofik
<i>Other Technical Specialists</i>	

## PART E - SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND COSTS

The summary of activities and cost table below identifies emergency stabilization costs charged or proposed for funding from subactivity 9262 funding sources.

REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES COST SUMMARY TABLE - Soda Fire

Spec #	Title	Unit	Unit Cost	# of Units	Work Agent	Cost
1	Control control of YST (w/ Transline)	Acre	\$300	94	SC	\$28,200
TOTAL COST						
<b>Work Agent:</b> CA=Coop Agreement, FA=Force Account, G=Grantee, P=Permitee, SC=Service Contract, TSP=Timber Sales Purchaser, V=Volunteer						

**PART F - INDIVIDUAL SPECIFICATION**

<b>TREATMENT NAME</b>	Yellow Star Thistle Control	<b>PART E SPECIFICATION #</b>	1
<b>NFPORS TREATMENT CATEGORY*</b>	Emergency Stabilization	<b>FISCAL YEAR(S) (list each year):</b>	2006
<b>NFPORS TREATMENT TYPE *</b>	Emergency Stabilization	<b>WUI? Y / N</b>	No
<b>IMPACTED COMMUNITIES AT RISK</b>	No	<b>IMPACTED T&amp;E SPECIES</b>	No

\* See NFPORS Restoration & Rehabilitation module - Edit Treatment screen for applicable entries.

**I. WORK TO BE DONE** (describe or attach exact specifications of work to be done):

<p><b>Number and Describe Each Task:</b> Monitor and control invasion of YST</p> <p><b>A. General Description:</b> Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge has an active approved yellow star thistle treatment program. This fire burned with the YST treatment area. This project will provide for two treatments of the burned area during the next full growing season in the spring of 2006.</p> <p><b>B. Location/(Suitable) Sites:</b> Areas burned and adjacent area used for transport of suppression vehicles</p> <p><b>C. Design/Construction Specifications:</b></p> <p>1. Detailed treatment are provide in the USFWS Pesticide Use Permit for YST attached to this plan</p> <p><b>D. Purpose of Treatment Specifications:</b> See USFWS Pesticide Use Permit: YST 2005 for Bitter Creek NWR</p> <p><b>E. Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring Proposed:</b> Visual Post-reevaluation of treatment area. If new star thistle plants are present the area will be retreated.</p>
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**II. LABOR, MATERIALS AND OTHER COST:**

<b>&lt; PERSONNEL SERVICES: (Grade @ Cost/Hours X # Hours X # Fiscal Years = Cost/Item):</b> Do not include contract personnel costs here (see contractor services below).	<b>COST / ITEM</b>
TOTAL PERSONNEL SERVICE COST	
<b>&lt; EQUIPMENT PURCHASE, LEASE AND/OR RENT (Item @ Cost/Hour X # of Hours X #Fiscal Years = Cost/Item):</b> Note: Purchases require written justification that demonstrates cost benefits over leasing or renting.	<b>COST / ITEM</b>
TOTAL EQUIPMENT PURCHASE, LEASE OR RENTAL COST	
<b>&lt; MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES (Item @ Cost/Each X Quantity X #Fiscal Years = Cost/Item):</b>	<b>COST / ITEM</b>
TOTAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLY COST	
<b>&lt; TRAVEL COST (Personnel or Equipment @ Rate X Round Trips X #Fiscal Years = Cost/Item):</b>	<b>COST / ITEM</b>

TOTAL TRAVEL COST	
<b>&lt; CONTRACT COST (Labor or Equipment @ Cost/Hour X #Hours X #Fiscal Years = Cost/Item):</b>	<b>COST / ITEM</b>
Two applications of Transline (including all equipment, materials, etc. - \$150 /acre X 94 Acres X 2 treatments)	\$28,200
TOTAL CONTRACT COST	

#### SPECIFICATION COST SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR	PLANNED INITIATION DATE (M/D/YYYY)	PLANNED COMPLETION DATE (M/D/YYYY)	WORK AGENT	UNIT S	UNIT COST	PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS	PLANNED COST
FY2006	Spring 2006	Spring 2007	SC	94	\$300		\$28,200
FY__							
FY__							
FY__							
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>\$28,200</b>

**Work Agent:** CA=Coop Agreement, FA=Force Account, G=Grantee, P=Permitee, SC=Service Contract, TSP=Timber Sales Purchaser, V=Volunteer

#### SOURCE OF COST ESTIMATE

1. Estimate obtained from 2-3 independent contractual sources.	
2. Documented cost figures from similar project work obtained from local agency sources.	C
3. Estimate supported by cost guides from independent sources or other federal agencies	
4. Estimates based upon government wage rates and material cost.	
5. No cost estimate required - cost charged to Fire Suppression Account	

P = Personnel Services, E = Equipment M = Materials/Supplies, T = Travel, C = Contract, F = Suppression

#### III. RELEVANT DETAILS, MAPS AND DOCUMENTATION INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT:

List Relevant Documentation and Cross-Reference Location within the Accomplishment Report.
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